

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 169 940

IR 007 227

AUTHOR Phinney, Joanna; And Others
TITLE New Kid on the Block. Social Skills. Student Guide--Footsteps. Report Number 14.
INSTITUTION Applied Management Sciences, Inc., Silver Spring, Md.; Educational Film Center, Springfield, Va.; Maryland Univ., College Park. Inst. for Child Study.
SPONS AGENCY Bureau of School Systems (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 17p.; For related documents, see IR 007 212-233 and IR 007 396; Best copy available
AVAILABLE FROM University Park Press, 233 East Redwood Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202 (Student Guide Kit, one of each program, 1-20, \$5.95 per kit); Reference Section, National Audiovisual Center, General Services Administration, Washington, D.C. 20409 (Films and tapes only)
EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Development; Childhood Interests; Child Rearing; *Early Childhood; *Educational Television; Family Life Education; Family Relationship; *Interpersonal Competence; Parent Child Relationship; *Parenthood Education

ABSTRACT

This student guide for a program concerned with how young children acquire social skills defines social skills and describes some ways that parents can build upon their child's desire to get along with people and learn these skills. Designed around a magazine format to allow maximum flexibility to different groups using the materials, the guide is divided into seven sections: (1) an overview of the theme and contents; (2) a summary of the major learnings of the theme; (3) feature articles containing the major content and including practical suggestions for parents; (4) a film review section which includes a synopsis of the accompanying film program and a related discussion question; (5) three activities aimed at both individual and group participation; (6) a selection of field activities, discussion questions, and research topics designed to reinforce the ideas presented in the articles and meet the needs of a wide variety of classroom groups; and (7) a bibliography for further reading on the theme. (Author/JEG)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

SOCIAL SKILLS

New Kid on the Block

Student Guide

A world to be born under your footsteps...
St.-John Perse

FROM THE EDITORS

All parents want their children to learn to get along with other people. Some parents think they have to teach their children to like other people. That's not true. Children are interested in other people right from birth. The parent's job is to build upon their child's desire to get along with people.

In this booklet you will learn what social skills are. You'll find out how young children acquire social skills and some ways parents can make this learning possible.

CONTENTS

The Big Ideas	2
Social Skills: More Than Manners	3
Expanding the Child's World	6
Film Review Section	9
Activity Pages	10
Grab Bag	13
Book Browsing	14

THE BIG IDEAS



Social skills are more than manners; they are the basic tools needed for getting along with other people.



At first children think only of themselves. They have to learn how to see the point of view of others.



Parents can help their children learn social skills by their example, by direct instruction, and by giving them experiences with other people.

To be without a friend is to be poor indeed.
— Somali Proverb

SOCIAL SKILLS: More than Manners

We need other people,
not in order to stay alive,
but to be fully human. . . .

— Hugh Prather
Notes on Love and Courage
(New York: Doubleday & Co., 1977)

Getting along with other people is the heart of living. Knowing how to interact with others is necessary for being part of any group — family, neighborhood, school, job, community organization or nation. Through each new encounter, we stretch our understanding of ourselves and others. Being able to understand and reach out to others makes us feel needed and competent, a part of the group and yet uniquely special — alive.

Social skills are more than manners. It's good manners to say "Please" or hold a door open for someone else, but these may be only trappings. Social skills are responses which express basic attitudes such as:

- showing interest in others
- giving and receiving gracefully
- asserting our needs and rights in appropriate ways
- showing consideration and sympathy
- communicating effectively.

We are not born with these skills, but we're born with a need to love and be loved. Learning how to get along with others is a process that begins at birth and continues throughout life.

Let's take a look at how this process begins.

Manners Are a Means to an End

Manners are agreed-upon ways that people from different cultures speak and act. Manners express their basic attitudes toward other people. For instance, saying "I'm very glad to meet you" is a way to show interest and friendliness toward someone we have just met. Standing up when another person enters the room is a way of showing respect. Although manners can become mechanical when people use them without sincerity, most manners have developed from people's basic wish to show their consideration of others.

The specific behavior varies from one group of people to another, but in general, manners communicate the same basic feelings. In the Hopi culture, for instance, children are taught to look down when spoken to. Most Anglo-American children, on the other hand, are taught to look directly at the speaker. Both manners, however, are means of showing respect.

FROM "ME" TO "US"

Babies begin to respond to other people from the first hours of life. They like to look at faces and be held in someone's arms. And they quickly learn to charm adults with their smiles, coos and wiggles. Despite their interest in other people, however, they are unaware of others' feelings and needs. From their point of view, everyone and everything exists to satisfy their every wish. From their point of view, when they're wet and hungry, that's all that matters.

Children have to learn to see the point of view of others.

In time, children discover that other people's feelings and needs may conflict with or differ from their own. Although babies expect instant service, they have to learn to wait. Toddlers want everything they see, but they have to learn to respect other people's property. It's hard to hold their own desires in check and consider other people's feelings. Sometimes it's hard for children to understand other children's actions and make their place in a new group.

Because of their pleasure in being with others and their need to be accepted and loved, however, children learn these lessons. They begin to be able to share, to wait for others, and to express anger in appropriate ways. These lessons may be painful at times, but they have powerful rewards — such as making a new friend or being included in the neighborhood group.

GETTING TO KNOW OTHERS

During the first five years of life, children learn a lot about how to get along with others. Look, for example, at how their increasing social skills are reflected in their play with other children.

Babies enjoy watching, listening and performing for other young children, even though their parents are their main focus.

Martha coos to get her brothers' and sisters' attention. She may cry when her twin sister, Harriet, cries. Clearly, Martha can be very aware of other children, though she doesn't actually play with them in the sense of sharing toys and ideas.

Toddlers are very attracted to other toddlers, but they don't usually play with them. They play next to or parallel to them.

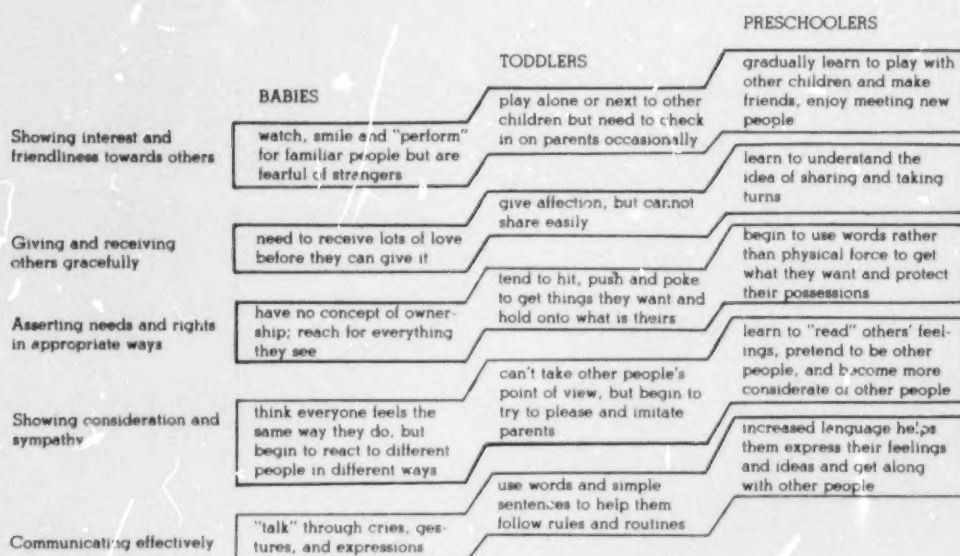


For instance, Fred, Charlie, Sasha and Kalia may gather in the same corner to pretend to feed their dolls. Occasionally, Sasha glances at Kalia. Suddenly she grabs Kalia's doll blanket. Kalia screams "Mine" and Sasha, surprised, gives it back — this time. It seems as if none of these toddlers really notice each other, but when Kalia decides to play with water in the sink the other children follow. At this point, children's social skills are still very fumbling and awkward. But these attempts are important steps toward learning to play and cooperate with others.

Preschool children are much more able to play together — they share ideas and toys, work out arguments and stay together for a longer period of time.

4-year-old Sharon, for instance, has learned to communicate well with others. She asks "What are you playing?" and "Can I play?" when she joins a group of children who are building with blocks. This skill helps her to make many friends and enjoy being with others. Like other preschool children, Sharon doesn't always play with a group of children. Sometimes she plays alone or with one friend. Sometimes she seeks out an adult to talk to. Preschool children are developing skills to deal with various social situations.

This chart summarizes children's growing awareness of other people and the growth in their social skills. Watch how each skill develops.



Learning to get along with other people doesn't stop in early childhood. It's a challenge to adults as well as children to become aware of the point of view of others. Both adults and children need to learn how to get along despite personal differences or misunderstandings. Gaining social skills is a life-long process.



EXPANDING THE CHILD'S WORLD

THE WIDENING CIRCLE

Children learn social skills from other people. Their parents are their most important teachers. Parents are first on the scene and most influential for some time:

PARENTS TEACH SOCIAL SKILLS THROUGH THEIR OWN EXAMPLE

Each child watches parents carefully, absorbing how they behave with him or her, with each other, and with friends, relatives and strangers. A child will often imitate just what he or she sees the parents say and do. We are often amused at how faithfully children imitate the conversations of adults in their play.

Four-year-old Sandy stood, with her hands on her hips, in front of her doll. "Now enough is ENOUGH," she said sternly. "You can't hit just because you're mad."

Often children learn more from their parents' example than from their words of wisdom. For instance, when a father listens to his son without interrupting, this sometimes teaches more than his demands to "listen to your mother" or "respect your teacher."

In addition to teaching through their own example, parents can:

GIVE CHILDREN EXPERIENCES WITH DIFFERENT ADULTS AND CHILDREN

Children need to interact with other people to learn to get along with them: parents' advice means little without this real experience. Parents can help, then, by including their children in activities and conversations with other grown-ups. They can also arrange for their children to play with other children on a regular basis. It takes time and effort, but it can be done by inviting neighbors' children into their home, setting up a cooperative play group or taking their children to parks where there are other parents and children.

Parents can prepare their children for life in our diverse society by introducing them at an early age to people of different ages, cultures, races and nationalities.

HELP CHILDREN INTERPRET THE WAYS PEOPLE COMMUNICATE WITHOUT USING WORDS

It's hard for children to see someone else's point of view. They need to learn how to "read" other people — their tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and actions. A parent can help by pointing out another person's intentions. "Karl's giving you part of his cookie. He's showing that he likes you." A parent can also encourage a child to make her own observations. There are many opportunities to "read" other people's feelings — in everyday life, or in photographs and drawings in books and magazines.

TELL CHILDREN HOW THEY SHOULD ACT IN SPECIFIC SITUATIONS AND TELL THEM WHY

Sometimes a child wants to show an interest in another child, but does not know how. For instance, a toddler may not know how rough she is when she greets another child. Her mother helps by saying, "Kathy, you hurt Amy when you push her. Give a hug like this."

Sometimes children need help dealing with difficult situations. Parents can often help preschoolers and older children anticipate difficult situations and plan how they should act. "Troy, when Uncle Junior comes, he'll sleep in your room and you'll sleep in Annie's room. Giving him a night in your room shows we feel he's special." A toddler, however, usually needs help right on the spot when it occurs.

PRAISE CHILDREN WHEN THEY USE SOCIAL SKILLS

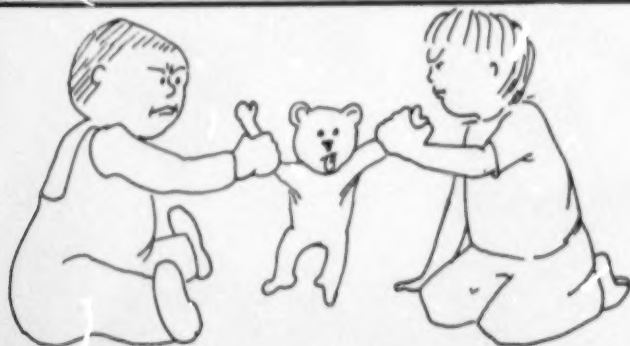
A parent's praise goes a long way. A smile, a hug or a word can mean so much to a child who's struggling to consider other people's wishes as well as his own.

Parents can show children that other people appreciate an act of kindness too. "Aunt Dorinda said that you helped make the beds. That was very thoughtful. I'm very proud of you."

DON'T EXPECT TOO MUCH TOO SOON

Children want to get along with others. Thinking in terms of "us" rather than "me" is hard, however. It's difficult to share a favorite toy all day. And who can wait for a turn on a swing when he doesn't know what "five minutes" means?

Parents, therefore, can't expect a child to be consistent — to remember to share, or wait all the time. Nor can they expect children to talk rather than hit before they learn the words.

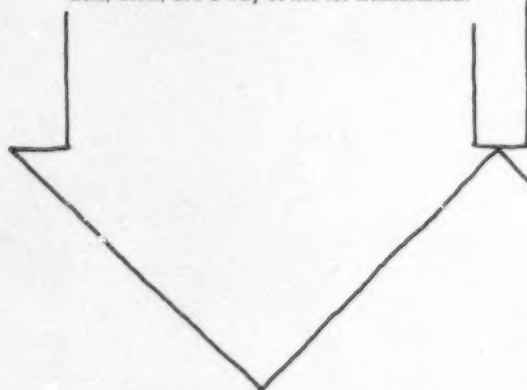


Although parents will experience ups and downs in teaching social skills, they too will enjoy rewards. Hearing that first laugh, receiving that painting all in red ("I made it for you!"), and watching that child communicate and make friends is a wonderful experience for the parent.

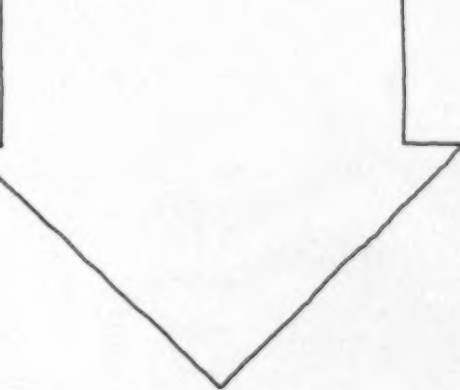
The Nature of Human Nature

Some people who study the evolution of man believe that selfishness is the strongest force in human nature. To them, the world is an arena in which only the strongest survive. The strong protect what's theirs and prey upon the weak. Some of man's most remarkable achievements, such as landing on the moon or the use of nuclear energy, are the result of one group trying to out-do the other, according to this point of view. War and competition, then, are a way of life for humankind.

Others disagree. They believe that people are basically cooperative at heart. They point out that our species would not have survived if man's strongest drive had been to kill and take for himself. The progress we have made — in space, technology, medicine and food production — has come about because men and women have worked together. We've struggled to control the environment, not to destroy each other.



According to this view, social skills protect man from himself. The parent's job is to train children to control their selfish instincts and mold them, as far as humanly possible, into social beings.

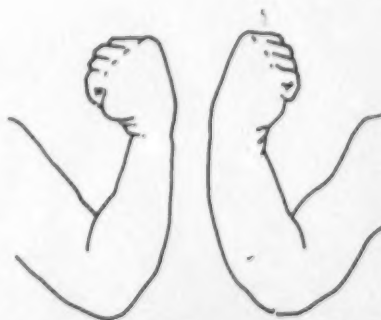
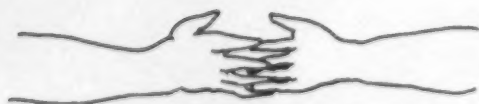


According to this view, social skills are built upon people's natural desire to get along. The parent's job is to help children discover how to mesh their needs with others'.

What do you think?

For centuries people have debated this question. The debate will probably go on as long as mankind lasts.

Whether or not people are motivated by selfishness or unselfishness, hate and anger or love and compassion, these are deep-seated emotions. Social skills enable us to express these feelings and get along with other people.



FILM REVIEW SECTION

New Kid on the Block

The Marshall family — Ted, Sandy, Marc, and Portia — move into a renovated townhouse in an old city neighborhood. When they move in they do not feel welcome. Marc feels left out and insecure with the children on the block because they play a game called "the dozens" that he doesn't know or understand. Sandy finds that her neighbor, Mavis Herlihy, avoids her in the store. And none of the men on the block speak to Ted on his way home from work.

Finally, things change. Portia makes friends with Elise, Mavis' daughter. Sandy invites the unfriendly Mavis in for coffee and gets to know her. From Mavis, Sandy and Ted learn that neighbors are hostile to them because they fear that the Marshalls are speculators. Then, Ted clears up the misunderstanding and Marc joins the children as they play "the dozens."

WHAT SOCIAL SKILLS DID EACH MEMBER OF THE MARSHALL FAMILY USE TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?



ACTIVITY PAGES

activity #1

PERKING UP THE PERKINS

This activity focuses on some situations that arise in the Perkins family. Mel and Ann Perkins have three children — Mark (10 months), Tommy (2½) and Troy (4). Mel and Ann need advice for the following situations:

Situation #1

Company comes for lunch. The Morgans bring their two small children to the Perkins' house. After lunch, all the children head for the toys...



Based on the chart on page 5, how would you expect each Perkins child to react when his toy is picked up by one of the Morgan children?

What can Ann and Mel do to teach their children to share?

How can Mel and Ann prepare for the next visit so that there are fewer sharing problems?

Situation #2

Mel Perkins' father, whom the children have never met, is coming for Thanksgiving.



Based on the chart on page 5, how would you expect Mark, Tommy and Troy to react when they first see their grandfather? How might Mel and Ann prepare their children so that they show an interest in their grandfather when he arrives? What are some ways the children can show their grandfather that they are glad to meet him? What can the parents do to help the children use their social skills?

Situation #3

The Perkins and their friends have started a play group to help their children learn how to get along with others. Ann and Mel notice that one child in the play group tends to grab other children's toys and that each of their children needs to learn how to protect his possessions. Mark cries, and both Tommy and Troy hit when the child grabs their toys.



Based on the chart on page 5, do you think that each Perkins child reacts in typical ways for a child in his age group?



What can Mel and Ann do to help each child protect his possessions in appropriate ways?

Situation #4

Ann Perkins' best friend has come over to their house before leaving for a 2-year stay in Germany. She and Ann have a lot to say to each other, but talking seems to be impossible. The baby creeps into places where he gets stuck and picks this time to explore the contents of Ann's pocketbook. Tommy and Troy keep pulling on their mother's sweater and interrupting.



Based on the chart on page 5, what consideration do you think Ann should expect from each of her children?



What could she do to help them to be more considerate of her and her friend?

activity #2

A SKILLFUL DESCRIPTION

Think of a person who you feel is socially skilled. Write down at least 7 skills that person uses. Does that person exhibit all of these skills at one time? Does the person exhibit different skills with different people and situations?

activity #3

IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING

Write a short paragraph about the difference between manners and social skills. Create a chart with at least 7 manners on one side and the social skills that they reflect on the other. Two examples appear below.

Manners

Saying "thank you"

Holding the door for another person

Social Skills

Showing consideration and appreciation

Showing thoughtfulness and respect

GRAB BAG

to do

1. Observe a group of young children playing in a day care center, nursery school, Head Start center, your home or your neighborhood. Watch 2 or 3 children playing near one another for at least 30 minutes and keep a record of:

what social skills the children have (give examples);
what social skills they still need to learn;
what the adults in the room are doing to help these children learn new skills;
and
how the choice of materials and their arrangements affect the way children interact with one another.

2. Many young children watch and learn from T.V. Watch "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" and "Sesame Street" yourself and take notes to answer these questions:

Which social skills do children learn from each program?
Do you notice any difference in the way these lessons are taught?

Present your findings to the class.

3. Role play one of the following situations with some of your friends:

getting to know a person of the opposite sex;
interviewing for a job;
convincing your parents that you can travel alone to a foreign country;
talking to a very conservative person who disagrees with almost everything you say.

Role play the situation in front of the class and ask them to look for the social skills you used.

4. Invite an anthropology professor or graduate student from a local university or college to speak about the social attitudes and manners that are taught to children in different societies in the world.
5. Using an art form such as dance, art, music or photography, create 3 works that express your ideas about why people sometimes don't get along with other people.

to discuss

1. Try to remember how you were taught social skills. What was effective? What wasn't effective? Why?
2. What are some social skills that a child needs in order to get along in school? What kinds of skills does a child who lives in your neighborhood need? How are these skills similar or different from the skills a child needs for school?
3. Children of all cultures learn ways of getting along with other people. Often different actions express the same social skill. For example, some Japanese children are taught to bow to a passing adult, while many Anglo-Americans children may be taught to stand up while adults pass. What are other ways we show respect and friendliness in our culture? Do the ways we express these feelings differ even within our society?
4. What can parents do to help their children understand and get along with people from different ethnic groups, races, cultures or nations?

to research

1. How children are taught to share and cooperate at an early age in the United States.
2. History of manners — how they change through the years.
3. The differences between cooperation and competition in US and USSR and USSR and USSR. See also Reinhold's book *Two Worlds of Childhood: East and West* (1988).

BOOK BROWSING

Here are some books that contain more information on...

...the growth of social skills

The Child Under Six. James L. Hymes, Jr. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 2nd ed., 1974.

Guiding Young Children. Verna Hildebrand. New York: Macmillan, 1975.

Raising Children in a Difficult Time. Benjamin Spock. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1974.

The Roots of Caring, Sharing and Helping. Paul Mussen and Nancy Eisenberg-Berg. San Francisco: Freeman Paperback, 1977.

...understanding people in different cultures

Children of Six Cultures. Beatrice B. Whiting. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1963.

The Two Worlds of Childhood-U.S. and U.S.S.R. Urie Bronfenbrenner. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970. (paperback)

...the evolution and nature of man

African Genesis. Robert Ardrey. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1961. (paperback)

Origins. Richard E. Leakey and Roger Lewin. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1977.

CREDITS

Curriculum Development

PRIMARY AUTHOR:

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS:

Joanna Phinney, Ed.M.

Sharon Barry, Ed.M.

Laura Dittmann, Ph.D.

Robert Huebner, Ph.D.

Content Development

DIRECTORS:

Laura Colker, M.A.

Charles Flatter, Ed.D.

TECHNICAL CONSULTANTS:

Laura Dittmann, Ph.D.

Robert Huebner, Ph.D.

John Kurtz, Ph.D.

Bonnie Tyler, Ph.D.

Martin Bloom, M.A.

Design & Illustration

Sheila Humphreys

FOOTSTEPS was developed by a consortium of:

Applied Management Sciences

Silver Spring, Maryland

Educational Film Center

Springfield, Virginia

Institute for Child Study of the University of Maryland

College Park, Maryland

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people — staff, students, teachers and parents — contributed to the development of these materials. Two people in particular, however, deserve special recognition and thanks: Sharon McIntyre, for her tireless efforts field testing the materials; and June Hamning, for patiently typing — and retyping — these pages.

We also wish to gratefully acknowledge the ongoing support of the Division of Educational Technology, U.S. Office of Education, without whose assistance these materials would not be possible.

© 1979 Applied Management Sciences

Published by

University Park Press

International Publishers in Science, Medicine, and Education

233 East Redwood Street

Baltimore, Maryland 21202



Copyright is claimed until 1984. Thereafter all portions of this work covered by this copyright will be in the public domain. During the period of copyright all rights, including that of translation into other languages, reserved. Photomechanical reproduction (photocopy, microcopy) of this book or parts thereof without special permission of the publisher is prohibited.

This work was developed under a contract with the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, the United States Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. However, the content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of that Agency, and no official endorsement of these materials should be inferred.